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A History of St. John's, Pequea, Compass, 1929-1989

From its beginning in 1729 when adventurers from England, Scotland, and Ireland had settled in the Pequea Valley amidst virgin forest and peaceful Indians and built a church to satisfy their need to worship God, the body of Christ on this same plot of ground has persisted through obstacles and hardships to spread the kingdom of God. St. John's has traveled a long road of survival and triumph first as a mission of the Church of England, then after the Revolutionary War as a parish that called its own rector and contracted for a percentage of his services, next as a mission of the Diocese of Pennsylvania, and finally as an independent parish beginning October 29, 1989. Along the way, St. John's has attracted people of various religious and social backgrounds and has often acted progressively while still holding fast to its rich heritage. Those founding "adventurers" have handed down their brave spirit from one generation to another, even to the "adventurers" of today in the Pequea Valley and its surrounding counties. From 1729 to 1989, priest and people, guided by the Holy Spirit, have endowed the growth of St. John's through worship, stewardship, outreach, and organization. Each ministry's contribution in the past has become the foundation of the St. John's of the present.

The book, Two Hundred Years of Church History, 1729-1929, tells the story of those years. To illustrate its broad-mindedness, St. John's Church, in the early days, once welcomed a Lutheran minister to its altar, and often became a temporary home for Christians waiting for their churches to be built. Although the church doors remained closed for worship during the Revolutionary War, the congregation continued to have their children baptized and confirmed in local barns. Also, despite the fact that the Rev. Thomas Barton had closed the church because his continued prayers for the royal family in England were offensive to his musket-carrying congregation who feared that he was unfriendly to the American cause, he still carried on his ministry to the Indians and his flock at St. John's. Furthermore, St. John's lively congregations not only built a log church in 1729 and rebuilt two churches on the same site by 1838, but also had the present church remodeled after the modern Italian look current in 1907. Moreover, in spite of chronic financial problems, the small, caring country parish contributed to the relief of the Irish during the potato famine. Still reaching out, the Rev. Henry R. Smith at St. John's started Grace Mission, now The Church of the Ascension in Parkesburg. Also, long before it was accepted policy, this forward-looking congregation, in 1926, elected a woman, Mrs. Emma Marshall, to the vestry. In fact, from 1923 to 1929, dedicated lay people kept St. John's alive without a full-time priest and saw that supply priests and lay readers conducted services. The book may have ended in the year 1929 but the story of St. John's has continued. This history will take up the chronicle from 1929 to 1989.

THE REVEREND GEORGE STEWART MCKINLEY, 1929 - 1953

In the year 1929, the Great Depression had hit making survival an uphill struggle for most people. Into this predicament, sharing his time with St. Mark's Church, Honey Brook, came the Rev. George McKinley, a kindly, fun-loving Irishman, having studied theology in Dublin, Ireland, but having graduated from the University of Pennsylvania and the Philadelphia Divinity School. He led Morning Prayer on most Sundays, but celebrated Communion once a month and on special days from the brand new 1928 Book of Common Prayer. As was the custom then, the Rev. Mr. McKinley faced the altar with his back to the people for the consecration of the bread and wine. His Irish brogue made people pay attention to his sermons as they wondered whether he was talking about the "store" at Cains or the "star" of Bethlehem. A choir led the congregational singing accompanied by Catherine (Kittie) McKinley on the pipe organ hand-pumped by the sexton. When necessary, Anna Seldomridge substituted. Attendance at worship required dresses and hats for the ladies and suits for the men. In fact, a priest could refuse communion to a hatless female. Worshippers knelt on the floor unless they brought a kneeling bench or pillow from home.

The Rev. Mr. McKinley immediately became a pastor to his people. His parishioners called him "the visiting preacher" because he visited on a daily basis, careening around the roads in his car, with Kittie by his side, often landing in a ditch or field. Children often called him "Rev. Banana" because he always brought a banana to cheer a sick child.

St. John's, Pequea, Compass celebrated the 200th anniversary of its founding in 1929 also. The new rector and vestry had extended a "hearty welcome" to the festivities which started at 10:30 AM and concluded at 4:00 PM. On September 28, 1929, a beautiful, clear day, the celebration began with Holy Communion celebrated by the Rt. Rev. Thomas J. Garland, Bishop of the Diocese of Pennsylvania. Anna Seldomridge remembers the church being so full that she and three other girls had to sit on the window sill in the back of the church during the service. After lunch in the basement of the church, the program continued with harp, cornet and violin solos. Miss Edith L. Baldwin gave an historical address. Pastors from neighboring churches brought greetings and the day ended with the hymn, "Blest Be the Tie That Binds", prayers and benediction. Written for the occasion, the history of the church covering the first two hundred years went on sale for $2.50.

Unfortunately, on June 30, 1931, Chester Ross, whose name appears as the writer of Two Hundred Years of Church History, who had served as lay reader, secretary and treasurer of the vestry, and on the committee for the two hundredth anniversary, was called to account by the vestry to "explain his method of Bookkeeping." Not being able to give a satisfactory explanation, "it was agreed by all to free Mr. Ross of his past accounts. It

was regularly moved and seconded that Chester Ross resign as Lay Reader of St. John's Episcopal Church. Chester Ross resigned on his own accord as Secretary of the Vestry." (Vestry minutes, June 30, 1931)

Significant physical changes to the church building in keeping with new scientific inventions were in store. In 1929, the lamps in the church and Sunday School burned kerosene. By 1930, the vestry voted to electrify both the church and the Sunday School (the rooms directly beneath the church) with profits from the chicken and waffle supper. By charging adults 50 cents and children 35 cents, the committee proudly turned over $134.00 to pay the total bill of installation. In 1938, Earl Isaacs donated his time and skill to wire the pipe organ, thus relieving the sexton of pumping the bellows each time the organ needed power. Profits from the chicken and waffle and turkey suppers, popular at the time, enabled St. John's to enlarge the kitchen, lay a new carpet, replace the coal stove with an oil burner, put on a new roof, and paint the interior of the church during the Rev. Mr. McKinley's ministry. In 1947, because no one drove a horse to church any more, the horse sheds that stood where the parish house is now were sold at the Intercourse Auction. Also, the rectory received a new garage replacing the old barn.

Though the properties saw changes, the organizations of St. John's remained stable. The vestry contained fourteen elected persons required to meet twice a year, in April and September. During the time before the oil burner arrived, the secretary of the vestry, in addition to taking the minutes, had to order four to six tons of coal to get through the winter. In those days, the regular parish meeting convened on Easter Monday. The men worked outside and in the cemetery, as the women house-cleaned the inside of the church. They enjoyed a hearty pot luck lunch followed by a business meeting to elect the vestry and discuss parish affairs. In addition to the vestry, St. John's Sunday School had an enrollment of 85 children who met in the rooms beneath the church and upstairs. By 1932, Miss Edith L. Baldwin, who typified the faithful Sunday School teacher, had been teaching Sunday School for 54 years.

Since its formation in 1885, the Women's Auxiliary remained a center of vitality and outreach at St. John's. A direct arm of the Women's Convocation of Chester and the Diocese, the women worked "to advance the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Preamble of the Constitution of the Women's Auxiliary to the Convocation of Chester). Nearly every month the women purchased material from the Supply Department of the Diocese to make clothes for hospitals, schools, and orphanages at home and abroad. During the Depression, the clothing often went immediately to church members in need. Sometimes the clothing went to Shanghai or Alaska. Once a year

delegates from all parishes met at Church House to view everyone's handiwork and to see how their small contributions became great when added together.

In addition, the women of the Auxiliary not only sewed quilts (some selling for $4.00), aprons, dust caps and fancy work, but also held suppers to help St. John's make improvements and pay bills. Sometimes they met as many as three times a month to complete their sewing. This concerned organization also met the needs of parishioners as they sent flowers, fruit baskets and cards, and prepared meals for the sick and for families of deceased members. As well, the women received spiritual nourishment as they entertained speakers at their meetings and attended Convocation meetings and services. The day the Women's Convocation of Chester came to St. John's was a shining moment as reflected in Mary Burt's minutes for May 16, 1929:

> The Spring Meeting for the Women's Auxiliary to the Convocation of Chester was held at St. John's Church on May 16, 1929. The day was warm and lovely and nature seemed to cooperate with us in preparing for this momentous occasion....Approximately three hundred people were assembled, the pews being filled to their capacity and one-hundred and twenty three chairs placed in the aisles. At the close of the morning session a most terrific storm occurred which made it impossible for the people to go outside for luncheon and two-thirds of them remained in their pews opening their lunch boxes and enjoying a hearty luncheon which was made more palatable by hot coffee, ice cream and cake which had been provided by the members of the Auxiliary of st. John's Church. The afternoon meeting was a most interesting one with many speakers....The sun came out beautifully and tried to make up for the unseemly behavior of the weather at the noon hour.

The Women's Auxiliary responded directly to the impact of World War II. Elsie Parmer, President at the meeting of January 8, 1942, "suggested that instead of working to get money enough to sand and varnish the church, we just keep that in mind but wait for a while to do the work, as the money we already have saved may be needed for the use of humanity due to war conditions" (Minutes of the Women's Auxiliary). Eventually 24 "boys" from St. John's served their country. Andrew Fregede was taken prisoner by the Italians in North Africa and Samuel Killinger gave his life for his country. In addition to buying Savings Bonds, the women sent boxes, cards, and letters not only to those on the Honor Roll of St. John's but to other "boys" in the Compass community. Further patriotic interest sparked the women at St. John's to purchase two flags for the front of the church. At first, they purchased a United States flag and a Christian flag. However, the Rev. Mr. McKinley said that they should have the Episcopal flag rather than the Christian

flag. The two flags were dedicated on September 20, 1942, at an evening service with the Rev. Peter Van der Hiel from St. James Church, Downingtown, preaching the sermon. No matter what the need or crisis, the Women's Auxiliary of St. John's worked incessantly to "advance the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ." In the minutes, a special tribute went to Mrs. Emma Marshall, who epitomized the many Christian workers in the Auxiliary: "Mrs. Emma Marshall aged 93, died August 25, 1941..., a member of St. John's Compass and a very active one until her death. A very willing contributor in any church work, she was Treasurer of the Auxiliary and served on the vestry for a number of years. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her."

At this time, the congregation contributed its missionary offering through the double envelope system. One side was for St. John's and the other side was for missions. The Treasurer of Missions for St. John's sent all mission money to the diocese.

From the Great Depression of 1929, through World War II, and all of the social and technological changes leading up to 1953, the Rev. George McKinley kindled and nourished a pastoral relationship with the congregation at St. John's. He died in Coatesville in 1958. Though his body lies in St. John's cemetery, his spirit lives on, because this faithful priest's pastoral care laid a strong foundation for St. John's entry into the modern world.

Those members of the congregation serving on the vestry for the 24 years that the Rev. Mr. McKinley served are the following:

Garfield Ammon - Senior Warden
Clement Baldwin
Nathaniel Burt - Senior Warden
Frank Hershey - Secretary of the vestry for 31 years
James McCowan
Walter Reeser
Aldus Seldomridge - Church Treasurer for 24 years

Those serving 20 years during this time included:

Elmer Leary
Elmer Stanley - Treasurer of Missions for 10 years

Those serving 16 year terms included:

Amos Esworthy
Marvin Stern

Others on the vestry during this time include the following:

Harry Ammon
Arthur Burt
John Diller
Levi Engle
Lewis Esworthy
Edward Hatton
Howard Hatton
Earl Isaacs
John Jackson
Emma Marshall

Charles Miller
Joseph Norris, Sr.
R. Chester Ross
James Skiles
Ellis Stern

THE REVEREND HARRIS EDWARD BALDWIN, JR. 1953 - 1955

Celebrating his first service on October 8, 1953, the Rev. Harris E. Baldwin arrived to continue God's work at St. John's Church and The Church of the Ascension, Parkesburg. He initiated a Children's Day service featuring solos and poetry recitation that caused the attendance to double on that day. Also, for the first time in many years, St. John's had licensed lay readers, Nathaniel Burt and Vernon Hershey, who could conduct the services. Furthermore, to provide organized, reverent care for worship preparation, the Rev. Mr. Baldwin started St. John's first Altar Guild, with Anna Seldomridge as its president.

The Altar Guild's "objects" were to "prepare for the worship of the church..., to provide for the suitable furnishing and decoration of the altar..., to furnish and care for the vestments..., to care for the font, and to have a general oversight of the proper cleansing of the church" (By-Laws of the Altar Guild, June 29, 1954). The twelve women worked hard to fulfill their duties which included learning prayers and meditations while working to prepare the church for worship, purchasing the bread and wine, and raising money for new supplies.

An interesting change appears in the Service Record Book on June 13, 1954 as the Rev. Mr. Baldwin signs himself as "vicar" instead of "rector" as he had all previous Sundays. When asked why, he said that he had just realized that he was not a rector, the minister-in-charge, but a vicar who served a mission for the bishop, who was the legal rector.

Although St. John's members had previously attended Diocesan functions, such as the United Thank Offering ingathering and Convention affairs, the Sunday School teachers actively joined the Main Line Teachers' Organization. Furthermore, the Women's Auxiliary raised money to send teachers to conferences at Ursinus College.

Also on October 31, 1954, 175 persons celebrated St. John's 225th anniversary with Evening Prayer and sermon. The Rev. Robert C. Batchelder, Jr., from St. James Church, Lancaster, preached.

In 1955, the Rev. Mr. Baldwin left to go to St. Mary's Church, Haledon, New Jersey.

THE REVEREND FREDERICK AUGUST BREUNINGER 1955 - 1957

On June 26, 1955, the Rev. Frederick A. Breuninger came as a deacon to St. John's, then sharing its priest with The Church of the Ascension, Parkesburg. The Rev. Joseph H. Laird at St. Mark's Church, Honey Brook celebrated the Eucharist for St. John's with the Rev. Mr. Breuninger conducting the Morning Prayer services until his ordination to the priesthood. This was the second priest ordained at St. John's, the first being the Rev. Edward Y. Buchanan in September, 1835. In December, 1955, the Right Reverend J. Gillespie Armstrong, Suffragan Bishop of Pennsylvania, ordained the Rev. Frederick A. Breuninger in the presence of 200 worshippers.

Under the Rev. Mr. Breuninger's direction, a major change in improving personal stewardship began as Arthur Burt headed a door-to-door canvass. He and his committee showed success for their pains when they reported a need for thirty more sets of envelopes. At the same time, Clement Baldwin, who chaired the drive for indoor plumbing, drove around for donations, even receiving $25 from the contractor himself.

Enrollment at Sunday School grew to 106 pupils. In addition to classes, the members enjoyed Strawberry Festivals, picnics at New Holland, rides on Truman Parmer's milk cart (the hay replacing the milk cans) and a sale of 900 boxes of Jello!

The numerous young adults of the parish got together, drew up by-laws, and formed the Young Adult Fellowship. They met once a month, had Bible study, and planned activities for fun, fellowship, and benefit for St. John's. The 25-30 couples held dances at the Honey Brook Grange, progressive dinners, Strawberry Festivals, corn roasts, Halloween parties and work parties.

With the sale of the old hitching posts to the right of the church, the ground was cleared for a new parish house and eventually a new parking lot. The new Young Adult Fellowship kicked off the building fund with $200. St. John's growing congregation needed room.

Conducting his last service of Morning Prayer at St. John's on October 20, 1957, the Rev. Mr. Breuninger accepted a call to St. Peter's Church in the Great Valley. He died of a heart attack June 8, 1982.

THE REVEREND HENRY JAMES SHARP 1957 - 1960

The Rev. Henry J. Sharp, having come to minister to St. John's and The Church of the Ascension, Parkesburg, lived in the Compass rectory. He led his first service of Morning Prayer on December 8, 1957. Under his leadership, the Sunday School enjoyed a peak enrollment. Vernon Hershey, who served as Sunday School superintendent for 20 years, kept a roster of 140 scholars.

Classes met in every nook and cranny upstairs and downstairs in the church. For a while, every Sunday the children requested number 88 in the Hymns for Christian Service and made the rafters ring with "When The Roll Is Called Up Yonder." As the older folks got tired of hearing it, they convinced the powers that be to ban the Gospel song for three months. At this same time, the Young Adult Fellowship flourished, still meeting for Bible lessons, social activities, and fund-raising for the church. Meanwhile, the building fund was growing along with the Sunday School.

While working to increase the building fund, the congregation continued to modernize and improve the church building by adding a pulpit and a lectern in memory of the Rev. Mr. McKinley, a tile ceiling, and a front entrance to the communion rail. The vestry also authorized painting of the church's interior and the installation of a new iron boiler.

On November 13, 1960, the Rev. Mr. Sharp left a lively St. John's for St. Paul's Church, Oaks, in Montgomery County.

THE REVEREND ANTHONY JOSEPH MATTES 1960 - 1965

The Rev. Anthony Mattes, a former Baptist minister, came to St. John's on April 9, 1961, again sharing ministry with The Church of the Ascension, Parkesburg. This ministry of priest and people saw the completion of the parish house in 1963. It was as practical as it was beautiful. Sliding partitions provided ten rooms each equipped with cabinet space, a blackboard and a window whose shade could double as a screen for slides or filmstrips. Putting the partitions back created a large meeting room. It was a great day when Sunday School students could leave their crowded spaces and spread out in the new building. The total cost of the parish house was $25,332.00. The Diocese contributed a grant of $10,000.00 and loaned $8000.00 at one per cent interest.

Moreover, the Rev. Mr. Breuninger, though rector at St. Peter's Church in the Great Valley, showed that he was still keeping an eye out for St. John's when the Convocation of Chester was considering what to do with the $2900.00 in its treasury. The Rev. Mr. Breuninger shouted out, "Give it all to St. John's!" Some whispered in shock, "What? All of it?" After some discussion, the majority voted to give the whole amount to St. John's for their new parish house. The tireless congregation raised the rest of the money needed to pay for the new facility.

Also in 1963, to provide all worshippers with a kneeler, Nathaniel Burt and Paul Glass spearheaded the building and installation of the kneeling benches. Nathaniel Burt donated all of the walnut boards made from planks he had stored in his attic. When Paul Glass took a plank seven feet long by twenty-four inches wide by three inches thick to the planing mill, the planer, upon examination, discovered two lead bullets made by a muzzle loader,

shot and ball, still in the wood. The planer asked him where he got such a piece of lumber. Paul told him that Nathaniel Burt had donated it to the church. The planer found it difficult to believe such generosity. Knowing, but not revealing, the monetary value of the plank, he impressed upon Paul the extraordinary value of such a gift. Paul Glass not only drew up the plans but supervised the volunteers. In fact, one night upon returning at midnight from a double shift at Lukens Steel, Paul was worried that he had not put the right sized bit in the drill to make the dowel holes to hold the kneelers together. He went right to the church to check the bit. After trying it out, he decided to keep on working. Soon, Henry Kruger came in to see why the lights were on and he joined Paul at work on the kneelers. Three others came over to check on the church: Amos Taylor, Earl Norton, and Arthur Burt. All stayed and worked far into the night. Later on, after the men planed the boards and put them together, the women helped to wax the wood. Members also helped to put on the pads.

The pipe organ needing extensive repair, the congregation purchased the Baldwin electric organ to enhance worship at St. John's. The total cost was $2,895.00 with chimes. The vestry paid for the chimes in memory of the Rev. George McKinley and in honor of Mrs. McKinley. In March, 1963, the organ arrived in a limed oak finish only to be returned for a walnut finish at a cost of $80 to the parish.

The Rev. Anthony Mattes, to increase the spirituality of his people, encouraged the young people to go to Denbigh Conference Center for a week of worship, study and fellowship. Furthermore, 14 men and women from the church went on a weekend retreat to plan the future of St. John's.

During the two month vacancy period after the Rev. Mr. Mattes had left on August 25, 1965, for St. James Church, Greenridge, St. John's added a cupola to its roof on November 21, given in memory of Louis Garfield Ammon, a faithful worshipper who contributed heavily to St. John's during the Depression. A loud speaker system for the playing of recorded hymns was donated in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Nathaniel Burt.

Those serving on the vestry for at least 10 years during the previous four ministers' terms (1953 - 1965) included the following:

Clement Baldwin
Robert Baldwin - Senior Warden
Arthur Burt - Senior Warden
Nathaniel Burt (since 1915) - Rector's Warden
Vernon Hershey
Dale Livingston
Charles Miller - Treasurer of Missions

Joseph Norris, Jr. - Treasurer
Earl Norton - Secretary
Aldus Seldomridge - Treasurer; Junior Warden
Others serving during this time period included:
Garfield Ammon - served 46 years total
William Baldwin - Secretary of vestry 7 years
Amos Esworthy
Paul Glass
Mickey Harrington
Frank Hershey - Secretary
Henry Kruger
Elmer Leary
James McCowan
Joseph Norris, Sr.
Walter Reeser
James Skiles
Martin Skiles
Elmer Stanley
William Willard

William Killinger was caretaker of St. John's Cemetery for 20 years until 1966.

Following the Rev. Mr. Mattes' tenure at St. John's, the Rev. B. Shepard Crim, the Rev. Barton D. Berry, Jr., and the Rev. H. Roberts Lorenz led the congregations at St. John's through the years that took in the Viet Nam War, social and political disorder, the assassination of public leaders, and liturgical change in the Episcopal Church. Also, ecumenism, though not new, became a force in the world-wide church. During this time of social upheaval, Blacks, women, youth and their supporters put their lives on the line for equal rights and justice. No institution escaped scrutiny and attack. This breakdown of traditional mores resulted in a testing of basic values and priorities in the church and the world. As the church struggled to keep its bearings in this maelstrom of unrest, many members remained in a less familiar church. Others, hurt, angry and confused, withdrew.

THE REVEREND BURRITT SHEPARD CRIM - 1966

During the Rev. B. Shepard Crim's first year at St. John's, the structure of the vestry changed. The church members voted to change the parish meeting date from Easter week to January. They decided to elect 12 members instead of 14 and to institute a more democratic concept of a rotating vestry. Each elected member would serve three years and then go off for at least a year. Four vestry persons would go off every year with four new ones elected. This system has been in effect ever since.

Also during this year, the vestry decided to stop the use of the two-sided envelope as the mission offering became part of the church budget. They believed that the mission offering should be a

percentage of all the giving thus representing the whole church rather than individuals who chose to fill the mission fund side of the envelope.

The Rev. Shepard Crim had come to St. John's on January 1 and left to go to the Church of the Trinity in Coatesville on December 31, 1966.

THE REVEREND BARTON DOUGLAS BERRY, JR. 1967 - 1969

When the Rev. Barton D. Berry, Jr., arrived on January 1, 1967 as a deacon, it was the first time in 45 years that St. John's had a vicar all its own. St. John's was honored for the third time by hosting the Rev. Mr. Berry's Ordination to the Priesthood on March 8, 1967.

Whereas the church's response to the Depression and World War II was a deepening of the pastoral relationship between priest and people and a strong reliance on established liturgies and family structure, the modern church stressed experimentation and a development of responsibilities for lay men, women, and youth in the liturgies and organization of the church.

The Rev. Mr. Berry's ministry signaled experimentation in worship at St. John's. The major innovations concerned the use of Folk Masses in singing the service, the Trial Use Liturgy, a greater emphasis on the Eucharist, increased lay participation and the use of a free-standing altar.

At the same time, the Deanery system replaced the Convocation system. Also, since the Deanery no longer took direct responsibility for the missions as the Convocation had done, each mission and aided parish, including St. John's, belonged to the newly-formed Coalition of Aided Congregations, thus giving each member more responsibility in planning for the total mission program and deciding the distribution of Diocesan funds amongst them.

At St. John's the vestry invited youth representatives to attend its meetings and serve as youth delegates to Convention. In fact, the Youth Group flourished under the leadership of Selena Baldwin providing youth dances once a month with live bands and money-making projects to provide funds for summer church camp. Meanwhile, the Sunday School held it own with 65 participants.

1968 marked the end of Earl Norton's 20 years as a faithful and competent sexton of St. John's church, he and his family having resided at the sexton's house on the north side of Routes 340 and 10.

On June 1, 1969, the Rev. Mr. Berry left to be a chaplain in the U.S. Army.

THE REVEREND SHEPARD BURRITT CRIM 1969 - 1970

When the Rev. Mr. Berry left in 1969, the Rev. B. Shepard Crim returned to St. John's on July 5 of that year and stayed until October 11, 1970. In addition to the memorable prayer seminars that he conducted, the church also sponsored a two-day seminar on the "Teaching Mission of the Holy Spirit".

St. John's made a vital decision concerning its worship services, a decision in keeping with the whole Episcopal church's response to the radical upheaval of traditional mores and customs. The church turned to the Eucharist as its main service on Sunday morning. Formerly, one of the major distinctions of "high" and "low" Episcopal churches was the "high" church emphasis on the Eucharist as the main service of worship on Sunday mornings. The "low" churches featured Morning Prayer. This distinction began to disappear as evidenced in St. John's decision to have Holy Communion on the first and third Sunday morning services and on the evening of the second and fourth Sundays. Morning Prayer continued as the service for the second and fourth Sunday mornings.

St. John's began to experience serious financial difficulties at this time, difficulties that it could not permanently solve with the traditional money-making fund-raisers of the past. To make matters worse, in 1970 the Diocese told St. John's that no funds existed to help them solve their financial problems. Nonetheless, this grave situation did not extinguish the flames of Christian faithfulness and endurance that shone in the lives of the members of St. John's who had weathered the storms of political, social, and spiritual turmoil.

In 1970 the Rev. Mr. Crim left St. John's for service with the High Desert Ministry in Oregon.

THE REVEREND HOWARD ROBERTS LORENZ 1971 - PRESENT

In 1971, the Diocese suggested that St. John's church ask the Rev. H. Roberts Lorenz, vicar of The Church of the Ascension in Parkesburg, to serve St. John's as well. After almost two years beginning February 7, 1971, the Rev. Mr. Lorenz stated that he preferred to work for one congregation only. The people of St. John's responded by doubling their giving so that he could minister to them full-time. After approval by the Diocese, in January 1973, the priest and his family came over State Hill to St. John's rectory and settled in the Compass.

From the beginning, the Rev. Mr. Lorenz maintained Holy Communion, or Eucharist, as the main service of worship on Sunday morning. For a while, he combined Morning Prayer and Communion to ease the way for many who had loved and were used to Morning Prayer

on Sunday morning. A musician and composer, he trained a senior choir. Beginning with unison singing and then developing into canons (rounds) and part singing, the choir led the service and sang an anthem a capella. Still singing today, the senior choir has developed an extensive repertoire which includes anthems from the Renaissance through the contemporary periods.

The vicar also trained a Junior Choir that not only led congregational singing and sang anthems, but for several years presented religious musicals in the spring. Some of those were "Joseph and His Amazing Techni-Colored Dreamcoat," "A Hundred Per Cent Chance of Rain" (about Noah), and a concert version of highlights from "Jesus Christ Superstar" and "Godspell."

Not to slight those in the pews, the congregation learned new music before the service began. To aid in following the music, new red hymnals containing the full hymn in parts replaced the old ones containing only the melody line.

Firmly believing that attendance in Sunday School should lead to worship at the Eucharist, and not be a separate institution, the new priest instituted the Family Service on the first Sunday of the month. The youth read the lessons and took up the offering. Coffee hour topped off the morning. By 1982, 90% of the Sunday School scholars attended church. Edith McCowan, also in that year, celebrated 56 years as a Sunday School teacher.

In January of 1972 the vestry elected Frances Smith as Senior Warden, the first female Senior Warden at St. John's. The parish continued experimenting with the Trial Rites and Proposed Book of Common Prayer. In 1977, the vestry voted to use Rite II as the main service of worship in the proposed prayer book, two years before General Convention officially adopted it. This action marked St. John's as a progressive parish because many churches and individuals could not bear to give up the familiar, poetic, and spiritual elegance of the language of the 1928 Book of Common Prayer. The ordination of women in 1976 by the Right Reverend Robert L.DeWitt, Bishop of the Diocese of Pennsylvania, also created a serious rift in the Episcopal church. Thus, the adoption of a new prayer book and the ordination of women caused a significant loss of membership in the church at large. St. John's, however, continued to worship and grow.

In 1967, because the Convocations had reorganized into Deaneries which no longer separated into Men's and Women's organizations, this new coeducational group had to forge its own identity and purpose. "Women's work", as such, suffered a severe blow as did the former missionary structure strongly maintained by the Women's Auxiliaries. The Women of St. John's, having a strong membership, continued to work, focusing more on the local needs of St. John's. Instead of being an active participant in a small convocation and the Supply Department of the Diocese, the Women of

St. John's found itself under a larger and more unfamiliar organization. Moreover, beginning in the 1970's, since women became more involved in parish administration and in work outside of the home, interest in attending women's meetings flagged. Thus, the radical change in Diocesan structure, the changing roles, and activities of women seriously affected the women's organization at St. John's. However, those who have remained faithful and interested ran the church suppers until April, 1977, have continued money-making projects, and have made fruit baskets for the senior citizens at Christmas time.

In the fall of 1976, Robert Baldwin, Sr., chaired the committee for the Faith Alive Weekend. For many, these meetings, prayer groups, and services for men, women and children brought about a turning point in their life in Christ. Their faith did come alive in Christ and they infused St. John's with their spirit. This experience also brought division because at the culminating service, the emotional expression of joy and the passing of the Peace by getting out of the pews and walking around to greet others made several members feel uncomfortable. Since then, the vestry has compromised by having the congregation remain in the pews during Lent and Advent to pass the Peace and to move around at all other times during the church year. At the same time, the friendliness and joy of rejuvenated faith from this weekend also helped to bring new members into the church.

Two years after the Faith Alive Weekend, Matilda Harrington began the Cherub Choir, including children who could barely talk up through second grade. The Cherub Choir first singing on October 1, 1978, has continued to sing for the first Sunday service of the month and to bring God's blessing, bright smiles, and warm hearts to every person present.

The Rev. Roberts Lorenz instituted Holy Week services in 1973 beginning with Palm Sunday with the reading of the Passion and continuing with a service for each day of the week to relive Christ's road to Calvary and the empty tomb. The parish still invites its members to make this liturgical journey through Holy Week as an intensification of what they do every Sunday, and an immersion of themselves in the death and resurrection of Jesus and its meaning in their lives. On Maundy Thursday, the space at the back of the church to the left of the vestibule became the "garden of Gethsemane". Rose Garver adorned the window sills, floor, and Sunday School altar with donated house plants. At the Maundy Thursday service, the priest processed to the back of the church with the reserved Sacrament and placed it on the altar, symbolically putting Christ in the "garden of Gethsemane". Immediately following the Maundy Thursday service, a prayer vigil continued hour by hour in an unbroken chain of prayer up to the Good Friday service the following evening. Easter Even, held on Saturday night, featured the young people singing folk hymn tunes of the Psalms and Canticles composed by the Rev. Mr. Lorenz and

accompanied by guitar. For several years, the winning pictures of parish art contests, photographed in slides, illustrated the lessons of the Vigil.

To encourage the family worshipping together on Christmas Eve, St. John's began to hold the service at 7:30 PM beginning in 1972. One of the memorable Christmas sermons was based on the phrase, "Not our presents, but His Presence." A carol service and pageant preceded the service at first. Later on, this part of the Christmas Eve service became part of the celebration of the fourth Sunday in Advent as the Sunday School classes have prepared an Advent dramatization concluding with a presentation of the living creche, with various members taking their part as angels, shepherds, wise men, or Mary, and Joseph.

In December, 1975, the Festival choir gave its first Christmas Concert at St. John's Church. This community choir, having been organized by the Rev. Roberts Lorenz, represented several neighboring churches. The Festival Choir gave Spring and Christmas concerts until 1979. St. John's, Pequea (Compass), The Church of the Ascension, Parkesburg, Sandy Hill Mennonite Church and Trinity Church, Coatesville, took turns hosting these popular musical events.

The vestry's decision to use the Diocesan Stewardship Program marked another turning point in the life of the parish. Consistent, sacrificial giving to the church became a priority for many members of St. John's.

Many groups worked in preparation for St. John's 250th anniversary year, 1979. Four sisters, Marion Hershey, Esther Kass, Edith McCowan, and Emmeline Hoskins raised most of the money for the restoration of the original chandeliers and side lamps of the church which Barry Baldwin installed as his donation. Marie Kruger and twelve women took lessons in needlepoint from the artist Sara Lois Bogren, of Strasburg, who designed a different theme from St. John's Gospel on each altar kneeling cushion. Each woman finished her cushion in plenty of time for the big celebration. A number of people dressed in costumes of different periods for the services. The Rt. Rev. Lyman C. Ogilby was present at the Spring celebration when the chandeliers, side lamps, and needlepoint cushions were dedicated. On October 13, 1979, at 4:30 P.M. a "Service of Thanksgiving for 250 Years of Serving God" began. Former vicars returned to participate in the service and the Cherub, Junior and Senior Choirs sang anthems composed by the vicar. The Senior Choir anthem was sung to the text of the anthem Jane Skiles heard the British soldiers sing at St. John's second church during the Revolutionary War, "Trust ye in the Lord forever, for in the Lord is everlasting strength" (Isaiah 26:4). An anniversary banquet in the parish house followed the service of Thanksgiving. The people

not only listened to the history of St. John's, the first 200 years read by Frances Smith and the last 50 by Robin Baldwin, but also to vocal and instrumental offerings.

Those serving on the vestry between 1967 and 1979 included the following:

Alfred Baldwin
Barry Baldwin - Senior Warden
Clement Baldwin
Robert Baldwin
Robin Baldwin - Secretary
Selena Baldwin
William Baldwin
Glenn Burkey
Jane Burkey
Arthur Burt - Senior Warden
Edward Cardwell III
Amos Esworthy
Rose Garver
Paul Glass
Matilda Harrington - Junior Warden
Mickey Harrington
Vernon Hershey
Wayne Hershey
Florence Johnson
Harold Johnson - Junior Warden
Henry Kruger
Dale Livingston
James McCowan
Stuart McLauchlan
Joseph Norris, Jr.
Minerva Norris
Earl Norton - Junior Warden
Connie Oberholser
John Owens
Martin Skiles
Frances Smith - Senior Warden; Treasurer, Cemetery Fund, (1968 - 1985)
Mary Lou Weaver
Paul Weaver
William Willard
Alice Young

Since the restoration of the chandelier and side lamps and the retelling of its history at the 250th anniversary, talk of restoring St. John's to its original state began. The vestry developed a policy that would keep the basic structures that represent the various periods of remodeling, such as the pews, but restore period pieces as they could. Since then, Robert and Janice Tindall have refinished the credence table, the original lectern, and the bulletin stand. St. John's also installed a ramp at the side entrance to provide access to the church for all.

In the year of 1982, a banner year at St. John's, the vestry decided to reduce St. John's assistance from the Diocese so that by 1988 it could apply for self-supporting status. At the same time, they decided to take a leap of faith by pledging a tithe of the parish income for their missionary quota. They would pay this ten per cent as the first bill of the month, the vicar's salary being the second bill paid. Showers of blessing rained on St. John's directly following this decision. Parish giving increased substantially and new members came.

The first parish trip to New York took place in the spring of 1982. St. John's smelled like hoagie heaven the Sunday after volunteers made hundreds of hoagies on Saturday morning to help fund the trip and to send money to Venture in Mission, a Diocesan project. Eva Valentine took the prize as star salesperson, taking bags of hoagies to Jamesway in Thorndale and setting up shop in front of the store. She sold them all.

In 1983, St. John's program of outreach and spiritual regeneration grew. The vestry started to begin each meeting with Bible study as well as prayer and they authorized the collecting of food each first Sunday of the month for the Kitchen Cupboard, a distribution center for the Steeple to People ministries. Calvert Hess headed the Committee on Outreach which suggested that St. John's support an orphan child through the Christian Children's Fund. The vestry agreed and has continued to support this project.

Also in 1983, Matilda Harrington instituted the Last Supper tableaux. Thirteen men replicated Leonardo da Vinci's painting of the Last Supper, dramatizing the moment the disciples replied, "Is it I, Lord?" to Jesus' statement, "Verily I say unto you, one of you will betray me." With the curtain in front of the altar rail closed and the church in total darkness, Jesus called out his shocking statement. All of the work to make each costume, each beard, each make-up formula, each pose authentic created an electric moment when the curtain opened to show da Vinci's painting come alive. After Jesus and the twelve relaxed from the pose, each disciple stood, told his life story, and witnessed to Jesus' saving impact on his life. When all had spoken and Judas' coins clattered on the table, the thirteen returned to the da Vinci pose. This annual presentation of the Last Supper has remained a vital part of the Holy Week observance at St. John's. Those who have participated in this special event are the following:

Forrest Book.....Christ
*Glenn I. Burkey.....Judas, Christ
*Edward Cardwell, III....Peter
Edward Cardwell, IV.....John
George Deckelman.....Judas
James Dickinson.....Nathaniel
Larry Freeman.....Andrew, Thaddeus, James the Less
Kurt Gansauer.....Nathaniel

*Calvert Hess, Jr.....Andrew
*Grier Hoskins, III.....Philip
*Harold O. Johnson.....Christ
*Christopher Lorenz.....John
David Lorenz.....John
Jeffrey McLauchlan.....Philip
*Stuart McLauchlan.....James the Less
*John Owens.....James
*Thomas Rohrer, Sr.....Thomas, Judas
David Rutledge.....James, Christ
Dennis Scherlacher.....Philip
*Martin Skiles.....Matthew
Donald Smith.....Andrew
*John Strattan.....Simon
*Robert Tindall.....Thaddeus, Judas, Thomas
Richard Walkup.....Simon
*Ronald Yancy.....Nathaniel
*Member of the original cast

This same year marked Rev. Roberts Lorenz' 25th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. It being his and Mrs. Lorenz' 25th wedding anniversary as well, the parish presented them with a quilt, each of the 48 squares designed and worked by a participating family, individual, or household. The quilt was not only an example of outstanding folk art, but a true labor of love.

The year 1984 brought more outreach, growth, and major decisions concerning parish status and property. A committee from the vestry took responsibility for having birthday parties at Tel Hai Nursing Home on designated months. In addition to sending money to Ethiopia for famine relief, St. John's pledged money to the New Mission program of Brandywine Deanery, and also to the Steeple to People ministries. The one new mission is now a thriving congregation at St. Mary's Church, Warwick, which has built and dedicated a new church. Another new congregation, The Church of the Transfiguration in Lionville, continues to grow. The Steeple to People Ministries under the leadership of the Rev. Randy Spears helps countless needy in Berks and Chester Counties.

Because of St. John's further growth in membership and successful stewardship programs, the vestry made formal application to the Diocese of Pennsylvania for independent parish status.

In addition, they adopted the project of remodeling the room beneath the church into offices and a meeting room.

Interested in ecology and efficiency, the vestry also took an energy audit directly resulting in light dimmers in the sanctuary and insulation of the church building.

In 1985, The Hymnal 1982 arrived. Many wondered why new hymnals were necessary when the congregation was still learning new hymns from The Hymnal 1940. However, the vicar had been introducing new music over a period of time by featuring a new hymn a month to help the congregation over the hump of change. At this time, to help their priest communicate the wine to the larger congregation, Frances Smith, Glenn Burkey, Matilda Harrington, and Calvert Hess, Jr., became licensed as chalicists to make communion go more smoothly. St. John's now has six licensed chalicists.

As a further aid to Sunday Worship, St. John's began to print bulletins typed by Ruth Ann Pavelik who has volunteered her services to the church. Adeline Gall, another secretarial volunteer, has typed The Compass, the monthly messenger. Both of these faithful volunteers also have continued to help with other secretarial duties needed by the growing parish.

As the larger church sought new and vital worship experiences through the use of new liturgies, so Father Lorenz changed the Easter Vigil from Saturday night to Sunday at sunrise. The service began in pre-dawn darkness with the light of the Paschal (Easter) fire. Light gradually filtered through the windows during the reading of lessons by candlelight and the singing of canticles accompanied by instrumental groups from the parish. With a tree branch dipped in water, the Rev. Mr. Lorenz sprinkled the people with the water of Baptism signaling the beginning of the first service of Easter. The vigil over, the ringing of bells brought from home thrilled the congregation with the realization that "Christ is risen". Following a parish breakfast, the second Easter service began at 10:30. St. John's still holds these two services on Easter morning.

During this year, Joan Lorenz held a three-day Prayer Workshop. From this a prayer chain formed to pray daily for any request given to them. Twenty-four people committed themselves to this work. For their monthly meetings, the Prayer Chain, and other groups, were happy to meet in the newly remodeled room beneath the church. John Strattan held another Prayer Workshop the following year.

St. John's extended its programs of outreach previously pledged and the stewardship program again showed significant increase in the giving of time and talents.

In 1986, the Rev. Mr. Lorenz, with the vestry's approval, lowered the age for communion and raised it for confirmation. This radical change in religious practice in the Episcopal Church stemmed from a movement to put in practice the church's belief that Baptism is the gateway to communion rather than confirmation. For many years the church had acted as if it were the other way around. In fact, most Episcopalians of today had to receive confirmation before communing at the Lord's table. Thus it was both shocking and

upsetting for many to receive the news that a religious custom that seemed to have worked so well had been theologically misleading. In order to keep in line with canon law, the Rev. Mr. Lorenz began to prepare children, whose parents approved, for a first communion. Confirmation would take place at a later date when the communicant would take more personal responsibility for membership in the church.

The year 1987 saw a carrying on of the worship, outreach programs, stewardship, and organizations already active. Edward Cardwell, III, directed the installation of a new bathroom in the rectory. To make room for parking, the paving and lining of the church driveway eased the situation. The rectory driveway received new blacktop as well.

Those serving on the vestry between 1979 and 1989 were the following:

Alfred Baldwin
Barry Baldwin
Robin Baldwin - Senior Warden, Junior Warden
Selena Baldwin
Scott Book - Secretary
Glenn Burkey - Treasurer
Jane Burkey
Edward Cardwell, III - Senior Warden, Treasurer
Edward Cardwell, IV - Junior vestryperson
Maureen Cardwell - Secretary
George Evans
Doris Evans
Sharon Frankhouser
Kurt Gansauer
Rose Garver - Secretary
Calvert Hess - Junior Warden
Harold Johnson - Junior Warden
Christopher Lorenz - Junior vestryperson
James McCowan
Antoinette McLauchlan
Stuart McLauchlan
Eugene Mowery
Earl Norton - Junior Warden
Constance Oberholser
John Owens
Richard Pavelik
Margaret Plank
Thomas Rohrer
Susan Smith - Junior Warden
Annamae Stewart
John Strattan
Janice Tindall - Senior Warden, Junior Warden
Leslie Tindall - Junior vestryperson
Robert Tindall
Suzanne Turpin

Mary Lou Weaver
William Willard
Carol Yancy
Eric Yancy - Junior vestryperson
Ronald Yancy
****
Estella Bowman has served as Assistant Treasurer
Mary Lou Weaver has served as Treasurer of the Cemetery Fund from 1985 to the present

In 1988, the parish began to get ready to celebrate 260 years of worshipping God at St. John's, Pequea, Compass. Janice Tindall headed the celebration project and gathered the volunteer committee to make plans. At the same time, St. John's received final requirements and deadlines from the Diocese that, upon completion, would see St. John's as an independent parish for the first time. They needed to revise the charter and by-laws and set new goals.

Two outreach programs developed also. Robert Tindall undertook the task of providing an Episcopal worship service, a condensed form of Morning Prayer, for Tel Hai Nursing Home on the third Sunday of alternate months. The Senior High Youth Group committed itself to help in this ministry and have not only led the service of Morning Prayer at Tel Hai, but have guided the residents to and from the service.

The Junior High Youth Group, led by Robin Baldwin, assumed the ministry of making food runs for Trevor's House to feed the homeless in Philadelphia.

In preparation for the 260th anniversary celebration, the year 1989 started off with a bang as the Sunday School teachers sponsored a clean-up, fix-up, paint-up project to refurbish the parish house. Contributions rolled in. The parish came alive with workers in supplying plenty of elbow grease and warm fellowship. Joseph Stewart and his contingent of mostly senior citizens cleaned and painted each ceiling tile. Thomas Rohrer headed the painters who covered all surfaces with new paint. New steel doors placed in a new entry way by John Owens replaced the old doors. Joan Lorenz and the Senior High Youth Group, with help, scrubbed the dividers. Robin Baldwin's Junior High Youth Group washed every chair. Janice Tindall's committee refinished the Sunday School altar and the antique oak table, replaced the artificial flowers and polished all natural wood surfaces. Stuart McLauchlan and George Evans replaced and repaired all lights. In addition, Stuart hung the new light in the vestibule of the church. Donald Smith and his crew scrubbed and waxed the floor, and Gail Hess supervised the washing of windows. Robert Tindall was in charge of hanging chalk boards and new cork bulletin boards. The parish house gleamed. Further renovation included painting the outside of the parish house, headed by Richard Pavelik, and painting and repairing the front entrance to the church, headed by Thomas Pope. Another work party

of men and women formed to clear out brush, trees, brambles, vines and poison ivy around the edge of the cemetery. Their hard work revealed a beautiful cemetery wall. In this year also, the vestry signed the final mortgage papers for the sale of the sexton's house.

In the last 18 years St. John's Sunday School has fluctuated in enrollment between 50 and 80 members. Two of its distinctions have been a Senior High Class, one of the few in the Deanery, and the growth of an Adult Bible Class up to 26 members. Moreover, St. John's Sunday School faculty has provided quality Christian education with the most attractive, up-to-date Bible-centered materials and has participated in Diocesan Christian Education workshops to find ways to help others learn about and experience Christian faith. In addition, the Sunday School still sponsors the annual Halloween Party, where big and little folks don mask and costume, sidle into a dimly-lit Sunday School room, sit in a chair, and hope that no one will guess who they are. Sponsoring the Christmas Party and picnic has furnished the whole parish with fun and fellowship. A highlight for everyone in St. John's Sunday School has been the singing of "Happy Birthday" and the giving of a pencil to the birthday celebrant. A special moment comes as everyone sings a second verse to the birthday song that in its simplicity tells of St. John's desire for all of its members:

Happy Birthday to you,
To Jesus be true.
May God's richest blessings
Abide upon you.

In 1989, worship at Eucharist continues to be the center of St. John's ministry to the community. From its beginning, the church's life and growth has depended upon the faithful worshippers, the quiet adventurers who, without fanfare or recognition, have come week by week, in rain or shine, through good times and bad, to lift their hearts to God in trust and praise. The adventurous spirit of St. John's is exemplified by its oldest lifetime member, Mary Burt, aged 94, who worships faithfully in the parish where she was baptized and confirmed, and where she has served all of her life with the exception of a few years she spent living in California. Mary Burt comes to church every Sunday that she is able. She says, "I hate to miss it."

The celebration of 260 years of worshipping God on the same plot of ground will mark a supreme moment in St. John's life. Gaining parish status has been the culmination of each unique ministry of priest and people, the adventurers of their time. Looking to the past to find strengthening words for the road to the future, the Rev. Henry R. Smith, in his historical address for the 150th anniversary, declared, "Waiting upon the Lord, the church fulfills her divine mission, though ministers and members die or desert. Whether the standard-bearer flings away the church's colors or wraps them around him as he falls loyally at his post,

the Church, with its faith, sacraments and ordinances, marches on to victory by virtue of the presence of the incarnate Son of God, who has promised that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against her."

Joan M. Lorenz
September 30, 1989

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